

Irregular Past Tense Spanish Verbs

*By Irregular Spanish Verbs
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Spanish Irregular verbs can be difficult. Some verbs are more difficult to learn than others but because these verbs are used so frequently they will be quickly remembered. This article concentrates on the past tense of these irregular Spanish verbs.

In Spanish there are really just two past tenses the student needs to be concerned about and they are the preterite and the imperfect tenses.

The Imperfect Tense

The imperfect tense is used to refer to actions in the past that occurred repeatedly such as,
I used to walk home every day - *Caminaba cada día*

It is also used to refer to actions in the past that happened over an extended period.
I used to eat paella frequently - *Comía frecuentemente paella*

And for "setting the stage" for a past event.
We were coming home when we saw Juan - *Veníamos para casa cuando vimos a Juan*

Non physical actions such as feelings and thoughts will also usually use the imperfect tense,
Juan was feeling sick - *Juan estaba enfermo*

In Spanish there are two sets of regular verb endings for the imperfect tense, one is used for verbs ending in -ar and the other for verbs ending in -er and -ir, these ending rarely change even when used with irregular verbs and are as follows;

"Regular" Spanish irregular verbs in the imperfect tense:

Enviar (to send)

Yo envi -aba (I was sending); tú envi -abas (you were sending); el/ella envi -aba (he/she was sending); nosotros envi -ábamos (we were sending); vosotros envi -abais (you were sending) and ellos/ellas envi -aban (they were sending)

Tener (to have)

Yo ten -ía (I was having); tú ten -ías (you were having); el/ella ten -ía (he/she was having); nosotros ten -íamos (we were having); vosotros ten -íais (you were having) and ellos/ellas ten -ían (they were having)

Decir (to say)

Yo dec -ía (I was saying); tú dec -ías (you were saying); el/ella dec -ía (he/she was saying); nosotros dec -íamos (we were saying); vosotros dec -íais (you were saying) and ellos/ellas dec -ían (they were saying)

There are two exceptions to the regular pattern of the imperfect tense and they are the important verbs 'ser' (to be) and 'ir' (to go) which will both need learning independently and are conjugated as follows;